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INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000778

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E WILLIAMSON, AND AF/SPG

NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON

ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL KPKO UN AU SU

SUBJECT: GOS WILL NEGOTIATE WITH CHAD, SEEK TO ISOLATE AND SANCTION KHALIL IBRAHIM

REF: A. KHARTOUM 775 B. KHARTOUM 760

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Sudan will not support Chadian rebels in another bid to unseat President Deby, but rather will seek multilateral sanctions against Khalil Ibrahim and JEM and will participate in the African Union mediation between Sudan and Chad, MFA U/S Mutriff Siddiq told CDA May 20. Siddiq said that to the surprise of some in the regime, President Bashir immediately accepted African Union Chairman Ping's proposal for mediation between Chad and Sudan. Siddiq claimed "we are not in a position to support the Chadian rebels anyway - we have a shortage of munitions and arms" because of the amount of materiel used to repel JEM. However, Siddiq predicted that the Chadian rebels would probably take advantage of Deby's weakness and said that the GOS could not prevent the Chadian rebels from attacking Ndjamena if they are determined to do so. Although the GOS remains convinced of Chadian support for JEM, Siddiq said that French Presidential Advisor Bruno Joubert told the GOS that "Libya was involved" in supporting the May 10 attack on Omdurman. CDA Fernandez urged the GOS to avoid any confrontation with Chad as such a move would freeze the Sudan-US dialogue.

¶2. (C) With regard to follow-up on the Rome talks, Siddiq acknowledged that although the GOS plans to provide security escorts to WFP food convoys into Darfur every 48 hours, this hasn't yet happened. He claimed that once WFP provides the necessary information about its convoy departures, the escorts will begin in earnest. (Note: Polchief will follow up with WFP May 21 to assess this claim and review coordination between the GOS and WFP. End note.) Siddiq confirmed that the GOS had also pledged in Rome that it would provide security to UNAMID convoys. Siddiq claimed this hadn't started because JSR Adada hadn't yet followed up on the offer, which the GOS communicated to him. Siddiq criticized UN officials "who are always moving" between Geneva and New York and are difficult to find in Sudan. It is in the interests of the Government, according to Siddiq, to provide this security "while UNAMID is still growing" and can't defend itself adequately from rebels and bandits. The GOS is angry about the theft of several UN vehicles by rebels, in which he claimed the armed UN staff had allegedly allowed the rebels to take their vehicles without a fight. Siddiq pointed out that JEM used some stolen vehicles in their attack on Omdurman, and that banditry has become a common way for the rebels to resupply themselves.

¶3. (C) CDA passed the message that SE Williamson would likely arrive for his next visit May 30, and would like to hold bilateral discussions June 1 and 2. Siddiq confirmed that the dates for the visit are fine but asked for greater

details about when and where the Special Envoy wants to go in Darfur given the particularly unsettled situation there. He added that Sudan had cleared the backlog of all American visa requests except for six remaining UNAMID Milobs and that should be taken care of soon.

¶4. (C) Comment: The regime continues to exploit the limited goodwill gained by the JEM attack on Omdurman, which has allied many in Khartoum with the NCP, at least temporarily. We note that Umma party leader Sadiq al Mahdi will sign an agreement today with President Bashir on broad principles for resolving the conflict in Darfur and participation of political parties in the elections. The agreement has been in the works for a while and doesn't represent a serious break-through since the Umma party will not join the government, nor is there a "deal" on elections, however the NCP continues to gain by demonstrating alliances with political forces in the North. Agreeing to negotiations with Chad now is a no-brainer for the regime, as Sudan can continue to pursue its bilateral talks with the US and press for further sanctions on JEM at little expense, while surreptitiously probe whether JEM is susceptible to attack by the Khartoum regime's Chadian surrogates. Siddiq's comment that the regime is currently running short on munitions is probably accurate, as the battle with JEM in both Omdurman and Wadi Sayedna, the arming of Chadian rebels for the February attacks on Ndjamerena not to mention militias in Darfur, as well as the on-going and escalating confrontation in Abyei, have probably put a strain on supplies.

FERNANDEZ